



Approved MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Seth Geiser

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

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July 18, 2013

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

Master Bike Plan

9th & Stewart alley vacation

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, chair

Osama Quotah, vice chair (excused from 1:00-4:30pm)

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Seth Geiser

Laurel Kunkler (excused from 10:00-1:00pm)

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Commissioners Excused

Debbie Harris

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast

Joan Nieman



1:30pm – 4:30pm **Project:** 9th & Stewart alley vacation
Phase: Urban Design Merit
Last Reviewed: n/a
Presenters: Mark Reddington, LMN Architects
Marni Heffron, Heffron Transportation

Attendees:

Anita Natn	Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action	Mark Reddington	LMN Architects
Bruce Parris	United Here Local 8	Marni Heffron	Heffron Transportation
Cindy Richardson	United Here Local 8	Melody Swett	United Here Local 8
Crystal Doll	United Here Local 8	Michael Abate	United Here Local 8
David Schneider	LMN Architects	Michael Dorcy	DPD, Land Use Planner
Greg Harris	R.C.Hedreen Co.	Michele Sarlitto	EA Engineering, Science and Technology
Holly Golden	HCMP	Natalie Kelly	United Here Local 8
Jasmine Marwaha	United Here Local 8	Peter Dobrovolny	Office of Sustainability and Environment
Jeanne Cameron	United Here Local 8	Robert Kelly	United Here Local 8
Joanne Engquist	Gethsemane Lutheran Church	Ryan Durkan	HCMP
Joe Raglans	United Here Local 8	Sandra Pon	United Here Local 8
Joe Stormer	United Here Local 8	Sharon Sutton	University of Washington
John Otto Liljenstolpe	Church Council of Greater Seattle	Shauna Decker	R.C.Hedreen Co.
Kate Lemly	LMN Architects	Stefan Moritz	United Here Local 8
Linda Mitchell	Artist	Stephanie Haines	DPD, Land Use Planner
Lisa Chen	United Here Local 8	Terry McCann	EA Engineering, Science and Technology
Lucas Amansec	United Here Local 8	Valerie Van Osdel	St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
Maggie Wykowski	Puget Sound Sage	Walt Niehoff	LMN Architects
Mark Brands	Site Workshop		

Summary of Proposal

The applicants are proposing to vacate the L-shaped alley in the block bounded by 9th Avenue, Howell Street, 8th Avenue and Stewart Street in the Denny Triangle neighborhood in the Downtown Urban Center area of Seattle. The right-of-way proposed for vacation is an “L” shaped 16-foot wide alley between the north margin of Howell Street and the west margin of 9th Avenue. The “L” was created in 1927 when the northern half of the original alley was vacated and the connection to 9th Avenue was dedicated. There is a small remnant stub at the angle of the alley left from the previous vacation. The alley is paved and provides access to existing buildings and parking lots on the block. The alley area is approximately 6,000 square feet.

The proposed project is a full block development for a convention style hotel. The proposed hotel design includes approximately: 1600 guest rooms; 150,000 square feet of meeting space including two ballrooms; 40,000 square feet of ground level retail, restaurant, and lobby space; 150 units of onsite affordable housing, and 700 below-grade parking stalls. A 6 story podium would contain the ballrooms, meeting and exhibit space, lobby, restaurant and a mid block through connection between 8th and 9th Avenues. Two towers would stand on the podium: the south portion of the project would contain a 35 story hotel tower; the north portion would contain 8 stories of affordable housing. Entry to the housing would be located at the north end of 9th Avenue. Entry to the below grade service area would be located on the north end of 8th Avenue. The approximately 20,000 square foot two way diagonal connection from 8th to 9th would include two entries to the parking garage, guest drop off, and pedestrian entrances to the hotel lobby and retail spaces.

Presentation

Shauna Decker: The team has met with community and neighborhood groups and was consistently met with support. Hotel will allow Seattle to compete with other large venues. 450K room nights occupied=37M\$. Not redistribution of Seattle dollars but new cash to economy. Tax producing equals a \$11M revenue stream. Project will create 1200 new jobs associated with hotel.

The project team presented the *PowerPoint* dated July 18, 2013, which can be accessed on the Design Commission website.

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Commission/Project_Review_Meetings/Minutes/default.asp

Mark Reddington, LMN Architects reviewed the presentation.

City Agency Comments

Michael Dorcy, DPD: Project came before two previous reviews April and June and EDG. Board recommended project to proceed to MUP; dialogue can commence. Probably MUP within next month or so, 6 weeks later then 1st rec. meeting. Agrees it is a huge project with lots going on and fine points. Scheduled meeting for 2 hours. First hour will be devoted to the affordable housing element.

Public Comments (limited to 2 minutes)

Stephan Moritz, Unite Here Local 8: Struck by potential for project but vague details. EIS did not anticipate convention use in this area and hotel space. Area will morph into Convention Center district. Further study is needed for 1.5M sq ft of convention space in neighborhood and environment. Missing key info – asked for matrix with detailed info on what is proposed. What is required by code? Request all information.

Robert Kelly, Unite Here Local 8: Alley vacation will go against Denny Triangle plan. Difficult and unsafe. Pedestrian crossing not improved. SDC needs full understanding of traffic mitigation. Need info on impact. Requires further study.

Valerie Van Osdel, St. Mark's Episcopal Church: Current resident of affordable housing. Appreciates including housing and combo of both. Needs more consideration re: Denny Triangle plan. Alley vacation does not support residential element. Specifically affecting workers and residents of low-income housing. Should not advance project until low-income housing fully understood and questions answered. Parking, ped traffic, pocket park and other issues. Safety of residents and workers of hotel critical. Good idea, but urges commission to request more information.

Dr. Sharon Sutton, consultant: Great project that will put Seattle in the major leagues, but the devil is in the details. Needs development standards for parcel park. Needs calculations. Need to know effect of large development on pedestrian environment and managing people.

Maggie Wycowski, analyst at Puget Sound Sage: Project will change traffic pattern and numbers. 400 – 600 vehicles per hour- not accounted for in downtown EIS. City not prepared for size of project. Affordable housing advocate is the developer's choice, but not a public benefit.

Melody Swett, Unite Here Local 8, Westin hotel: Appreciates more landscaping, but more info needed on green street pocket park. Thousands of cars and people - not enough UDM. Green space not welcoming to neighborhood. Just sees benefit for hotel users. What makes it a parcel park exactly?

John-Otto Liljenstolpe, Church Council of Greater Seattle: Applauds effort for onsite housing but urges building truly affordable house for income level. Hotel space not part of Denny Triangle plan. Project has a much different impact. Requests more information on neighborhood impact.

Rev. Joanne Engquist, Gethsemane Lutheran: Church has 50 units of low-income housing. Need for design to look at housing piece. 150 units worthy of a lot of attention by itself. Our project was carefully studied. Massing of project works well. Concerned about impact of poor seeking services in neighborhood and the traffic patterns relative to those issues.

Written Comments: Dr. Sharon Sutton, an urban design consultant to Unite Here Local 8, submitted a letter via email dated July 17, 2013.

ACTION

The Design Commission would like to thank the project team for their presentation of the Urban Design Merit of the proposal by RC Hedreen Co. to vacate the L-shaped alley in the block bounded by 9th Ave., Stewart St, Howell St, and 8th Ave. in order to facilitate development of a hotel, meeting space, residential units, and retail complex.

Urban Design Merit is the first of two Design Commission approvals needed before we will recommend approval of the vacation to the SDOT Director. Approval of both the Urban Design Merit and Public Benefit constitute a recommendation by the Commission to approve the vacation. Ultimately, the vacation is approved by the City Council. Public Benefits will be reviewed and acted on at a later Design Commission meeting.

Observations or Findings:

- The Commission typically receives more comprehensive context analysis of a nine-block area around the subject site. We did not receive this analysis in today's presentation however; most of the commission is familiar with the area and the surrounding context. Future meetings with the Commission regarding this application should include the analysis, specifically identifying adjacent land uses, traffic patterns and volumes, existing building massing, potential new buildings or projects in being proposed, major open spaces particularly in association with green streets including 9th.
- The Commission typically benefits from an overview by SDOT staff setting the context for the application and SDOT review to date. Unfortunately, we did not get SDOT input today but understand the design staff is working closely with SDOT (estimated at approximately 30% design review). The Commission would appreciate SDOT comment and feedback regarding the application, specifically as we transition to the Public Benefit discussion.
- The Commission values and appreciates the applicant's inclusion of the affordable housing component within the design submittal. The Commission believes adding the housing (rather than paying into the "fund" to gain the additional development entitlements) makes the project stronger and provides for an overall better urban design solution.

VOTE

For: 6 Against: 2 Abstain: 1- O. Quotah

The Seattle Design Commission approves the **Urban Design Merit** of the proposal.

Reasons for (2) opposed:

- L. Kunkler: *Opposed, due to affordable housing layout. With 80% of the affordable units defined as studio, the majority of the affordable housing will only be suitable for single individuals. This inhibits the ability for residents to grow families within the community. Strongly recommend providing more multi-bedroom units.*
- E. Sollod: *We are not holding this client to the same level of analysis as we have others. There is no report or comments from SDOT, no 9 block analysis, insufficient explanation of traffic impacts from the creation of this cut through. This is privatized space and would function as a port cochere for the hotel and retail. They presented the cut through as a public benefit but it is very unclear to me that it would remain so.*

The Design Commission finds the 9th & Stewart alley vacation proposal is justified in terms of **Urban Design Merit** according to the findings listed above and under the following conditions

CONDITIONS of APPROVAL:

1. As the project advances and more detail is developed, the Commission expect the through block connection to maintain the "openness and transparency" described and depicted in the presentation.

With this, the Commission requests additional design detail relative to the potential programming of the through connection and retail layouts with the understanding that the space is open to the public and accessible as often as possible.

2. The Commission would like to see additional detail regarding the programming and design of the 9th Avenue expanded green street parcel park. The Commission strongly suggests the park be oriented toward public use with allowance for spill-out cafes, etc. from adjacent retail space within the project.
3. The Commission requests SDOT's formal response and concurrence with the current design approach regarding safety and security of pedestrian and vehicular movement through the mid-block through connection.
4. The Commission would like the applicant to provide additional detail regarding alternative district energy options and more detail regarding site sustainability and architectural features proposed for the project.
5. The Commission requests the applicant provide detail information specifically in regards to the traffic analysis, and other pertinent data, currently being analyzed as part of the EIS Addendum in preparation for the MUP submittal.